

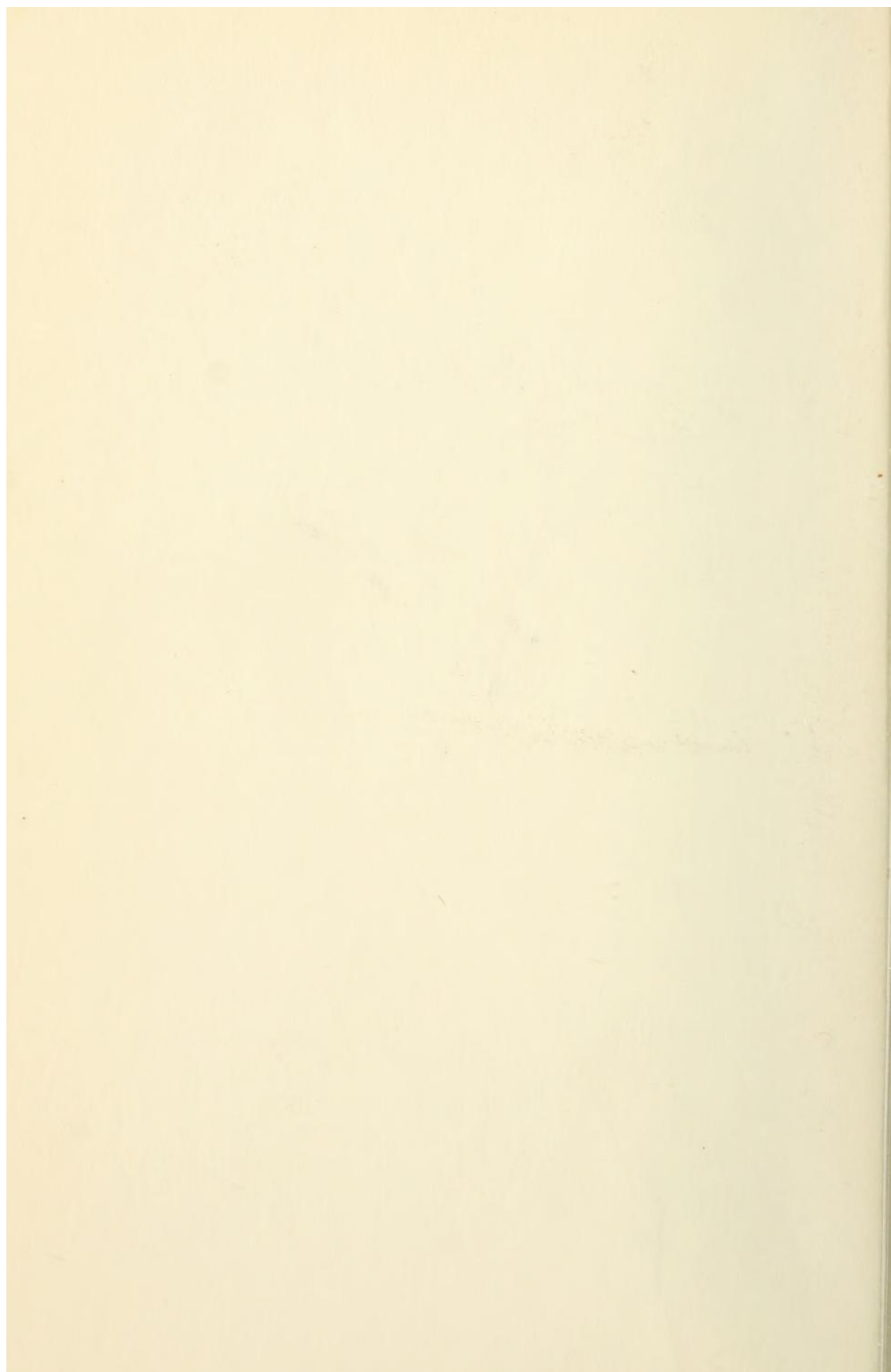


The History Of Setnupathi Dynasty

Ramnad
Samasthanam

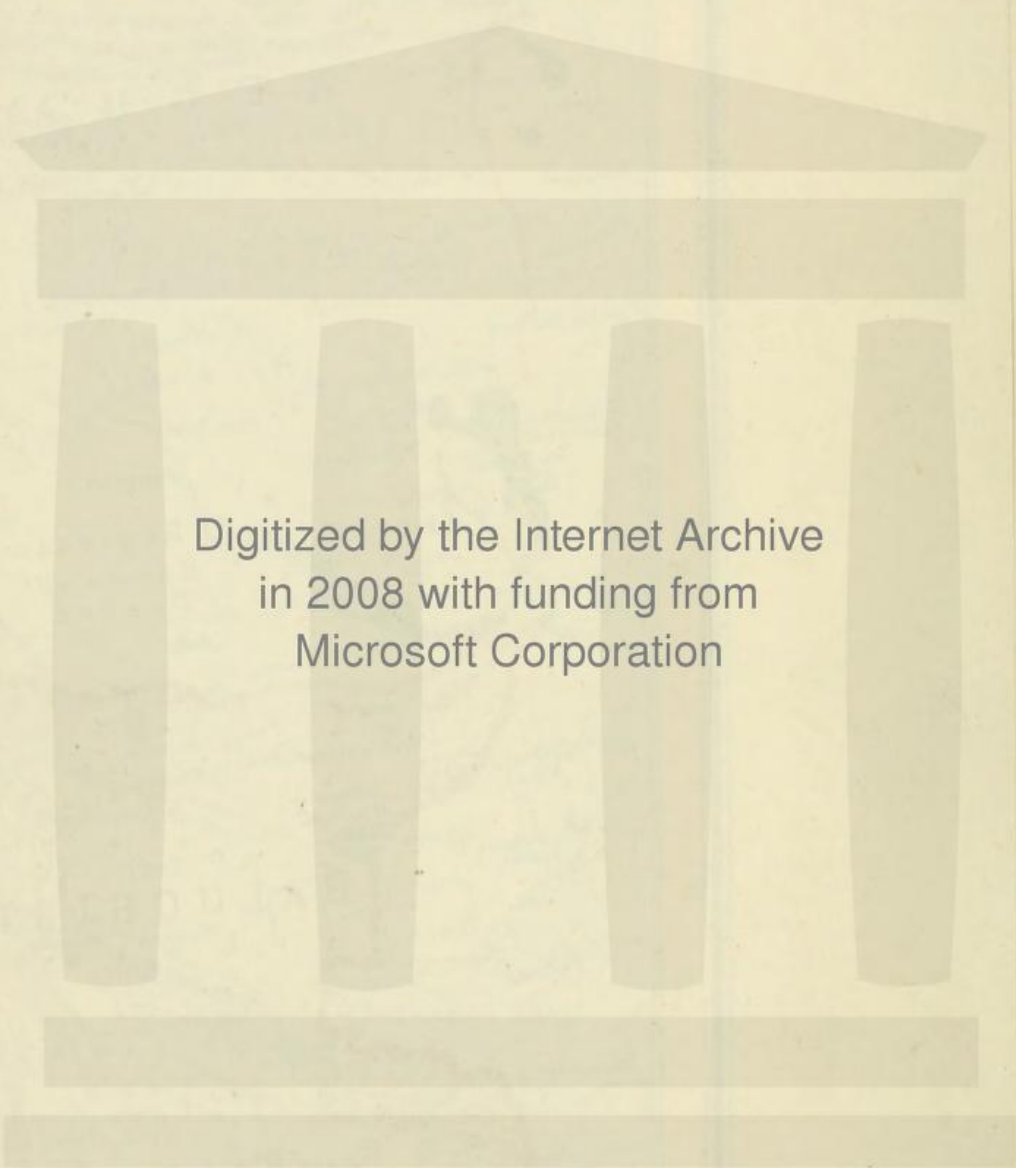
Sembinattu Maravar

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The Imperial Gazetteer of India

William Wilson Hunter



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THE IMPERIAL GAZETTEER OF INDIA.

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VOLUME XI.

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This *táluk*, the largest and most important in the District, is a portion of the amply irrigated Godávari delta. Six anicut main channels run through it, all of them admitting of navigation. Lands thus watered pay a cess of 8s. an acre for wet crops, 4s. for dry crops, and 16s. when water is supplied all the year round. The *táluk* is productive and healthy, except in the cold season, when it is feverish. Criminal courts, 2; police circles (*thánás*), 8; regular police, 76 men. The head-quarters of the *táluk* are at Rámachandrapuram, situated in the centre of the *táluk*, and north of the Mandapeta canal. Population (1881) 2992, occupying 560 houses.

Rámallakota. — *Táluk* of Karnúl (Kurnool) District, Madras Presidency. Area, 834 square miles. Population (1881) 94,698, namely, 48,393 males and 46,305 females, dwelling in 1 town and 106 villages, containing 19,029 houses. Hindus number 77,138; Muhammadans, 17,005; Christians, 548; and 'others,' 7. Civil courts, 2; criminal courts, 2; police circles, 13; regular police, 297 men. Land revenue, £15,158.

Rámanáda-puram (or *Rámnád*).—Chief town of Rámnád *zamíndárí* in Madura District, Madras Presidency.—See RAMNAD.

Rámandrúg.—Hill sanitarium in Sandúr State, Bellary District, Madras Presidency.—See RAMANMALAI.

Rámanka.—Petty State in the Gohelwár *pranth* or division of Káthiáwár, Bombay Presidency. Seven miles north of Dhola junction, on the Bhaunagar-Gondal Railway. Area, 2 square miles. Population (1881) 509. Rámanka consists of one village, held by two separate shareholders. The revenue is estimated at £150; tribute of £57 is paid to the Gáekwár of Baroda, and £10 to the Nawáb of Junágarh.

Rámanmalai (*Rámandrúg*, *Rámadurgam*).—Hill sanitarium in Sandúr State, Bellary District, Madras Presidency. Lat. 15° 6' 30" N., long. 76° 30' 30" E.; 38 miles west of Bellary town. Population (1881) 568. In the year 1846, the Madras Government obtained permission from the Chief of Sandúr to establish a Convalescent Depôt for the European troops, serving in the Ceded Districts of Madras Presidency, on the plateau of Rámandrúg in the Sandúr territory. The station is built at a height of 3150 feet above the sea-level, 1660 above Bellary, and 1200 above the surrounding plain. The plateau is from a mile to a mile and a half long, by half a mile to three-quarters of a mile broad. The average temperature of the hill very much resembles that of Bangalore, but the climate is much more equable, and the variation of the thermometer less. From its solitary position, even in the hottest seasons, the air reaches it fresh, being rarified in its passage over a lofty table-land. There are several well laid out riding-paths on both sides of the plateau, which afford from all points beautiful views of the

cloth is the principal manufacture. The climate is the same as that of the Deccan generally; the heat from March to May is oppressive. The prevailing diseases are cholera, small-pox, and fever.

Nargund and Rámdrug, two strong forts in the Karnátik, were occupied by the Maráthás in their early struggles; and by favour of the Peshwás, the ancestors of the present Rámdrug family were placed in charge of them. About 1753 the estates yielded £24,725, and were required to furnish a contingent of 350 horsemen. They were held on these terms until 1778, when the country was brought under subjection by Haidar Alí. In 1784, Tipú Sultán made further demands. These were resisted, and, in consequence, the fort of Rámdrug was blockaded by Tipú. After a siege of seven months, Venkat Ráo of Nargund surrendered, and, in violation of the terms of capitulation, was carried off a prisoner with his whole family into Mysore. On the fall of Seringapatam in 1799, Venkat Ráo was released; and the Peshwá restored to him Nargund and lands yielding £12,711, and granted to Rám Ráo the fort of Rámdrug, with lands yielding £2600. The two branches of the family continued to enjoy their respective States till 1810, when the Peshwá made a new division of the lands, in equal shares, to Venkat Ráo and Náráyan Ráo, the sons of Rám Ráo. On the fall of the Peshwá in 1818-19, the estates were continued to these two chiefs by an engagement. Nargund is now a lapsed State, being included in the Nawalgund Sub-division of Dhárwár District.

In 1881-82, the chief of Rámdrug, a Hindu of the Bráhman caste, was a minor, and the State was under the direct management of British officers. The Rájá ranks officially as a 'first-class' Sardár in the Southern Maráthá Country, and has power to try his own subjects for capital offences without the express permission of the Political Agent. He enjoys an estimated gross revenue of £12,360, and maintains a military force of 547 men. The family of the chief hold a title authorizing adoption, and follow the rule of primogeniture. The State contained in 1882-83, 9 schools, with a total of 591 pupils. The dispensary at Ramdrug was attended by 2805 patients in 1883.

Rámdrug.—Chief town of Rámdrug State, Bombay Presidency. Lat. $15^{\circ} 56' 40''$ N., long. $75^{\circ} 20' 35''$ E. Population (1881) 6810, namely, Hindus, 6012; Muhammadans, 764; and Jains, 34.

Rámeswaram (incorrectly *Ramisseram*). — Island and town in Rámnád *zamíndárí*, Madura District, Madras Presidency. Lat. $9^{\circ} 17' 10''$ N., long. $79^{\circ} 21' 55''$ E. Population of island (1871) 13,767; (1881) 17,854, namely, 9184 males and 8670 females, occupying 3193 houses in 9 villages. Hindus number 10,655; Muhammadans, 5611; and Christians, 1588. Rámeswaram is a low sandy island, situated in the Gulf of Manaar, the passage that separates the mainland of India from Ceylon. It is about 11 miles long by 6 wide, and was probably at one

time connected with the mainland. The eastern half is merely a narrow strip of sand. Rámeswaram island contains one of the most venerated Hindu shrines in India, founded, according to tradition, by Ráma himself. It is associated with Ráma's journey to Ceylon in search of Sítá, and plays an important part in the *Rámáyana*. For centuries this temple has been the resort of thousands of pilgrims, who come from all parts of India through Rámnád to the crossing; and it is to their control of the passage from the mainland that the chiefs of Rámnád owe their hereditary title of Setupati, 'Lord of the Bridge or Causeway.'

The island is to a great extent covered with *babúl* (*Acacia arabica*) trees. Cocoa-nut palms and a few gardens make up all the cultivation. It is principally inhabited by Bráhmans and their followers, who are supported by the profits derived from the temples. South of the great temple is a fresh-water lake, about three miles in circumference.

The great temple, or *coil*, stands on rising ground in the northern part of the island, in a quadrangular enclosure 657 feet broad by about 1000 feet long, and is entered by a gateway 100 feet high. The height of the temple is about 120 feet; and, with its majestic towers, its vast and gloomy colonnades, and its walls encrusted with carved work and statuary, it exhibits a grand example of the Dravidian style. The best and oldest portion is built of a dark and hard limestone, to which there is nothing similar in the rest of the building. Local tradition asserts that it was erected by the Vara Rájá Sekkarar of Kandy, with stone cut and polished in Ceylon. The inner *prákáram* or corridor is ascribed to the exertion and piety of an early Madura Náyak; and it is known that the *sokkatan*, or magnificent *mantapam* outside, was the work of two of the Rámnád Setupatis. The stone of this latter building is a species of friable limestone quarried on the island, requiring a thick coat of plaster to preserve it from decay under the action of the sea-air. Its cost is said to have been defrayed by the seaport dues of all the coast towns of the estate during the year that it was building. The most striking features of the temple are the massiveness of the workmanship (slabs of 40 feet long being used in the doorways and ceilings), and the wonderful pillared halls which surround the inner shrine.

Mr. James Fergusson, in his *History of Eastern Architecture* (ed. 1876), thus describes this celebrated shrine:—'If it were proposed to select one temple which should exhibit all the beauties of the Dravidian style in their greatest perfection, and at the same time exemplify all its characteristic defects of design, the choice would almost inevitably fall upon that at Rámeswaram. In no other temple has the same amount of patient industry been exhibited as here; and in none, unfortunately,

has that labour been so thrown away for want of a design appropriate to its display. It is not that this temple has grown by successive increments, like those last described; it was begun and finished on a previously settled plan, as regularly and as undeviatingly carried out as at Tanjore, but on a principle so diametrically opposed to it, that while the temple at Tanjore produces an effect greater than is due to its mass or detail, this one, with double its dimensions and ten times its elaboration, produces no effect externally, and internally can only be seen in detail, so that the parts hardly in any instance aid one another in producing the effect aimed at.

‘Externally, the temple is enclosed by a wall 20 feet in height, with 4 *gopuras*, one on each face, which have this peculiarity, that they alone, of all those I know in India, are built wholly of stone from the base to the summit. The western one alone, however, is finished. Those on the north and south are hardly higher than the wall in which they stand, and are consequently called the ruined gateways. Partly from their form, but more from the solidity of their construction, nothing but an earthquake could well damage them. They have never been raised higher, and their progress was probably stopped in the beginning of the last century, when Muhammadans, Maráthás, and other foreign invaders checked the prosperity of the land, and destroyed the wealth of the priesthood. The eastern façade has two entrances and two *gopuras*. The glory of the temple, however, is in its corridors. These extend to a total length of nearly 4000 feet. Their breadth varies from 20 feet to 30 feet of free floor space, and their height is apparently about 30 feet from the floor to the centre of the roof. Each pillar or pier is compound, and richer and more elaborate in design than those of the Párvatí porch at Chidambaram, and certainly more modern in date.

‘None of our English cathedrals are more than 500 feet long, and even the nave of St. Peter’s is only 600 feet from the door to the apse. Here the side corridors are 700 feet long, and open into transverse galleries as rich in detail as themselves. These, with the varied devices and modes of lighting, produce an effect that is not equalled certainly anywhere in India. The side corridors are generally free from figure-sculpture, and consequently from much of the vulgarity of the age to which they belong, and, though narrower, produce a more pleasing effect. The central corridor leading from the sanctuary is adorned on one side by portraits of the Rájás of Rámnád in the 17th century, and, opposite them, of their secretaries. Even they, however, would be tolerable, were it not that within the last few years they have been painted with a vulgarity that is inconceivable on the part of the descendants of those who built this fane. Not only these, but the whole of the architecture, has first been dosed with

repeated coats of whitewash, so as to take off all the sharpness of detail, and then painted with blue, green, red, and yellow washes, so as to disfigure and destroy its effect to an extent that must be seen to be believed.

‘The age of this temple is hardly doubtful. From first to last its style, excepting the old *vimána*, is so uniform and unaltered, that its erection could hardly have lasted during a hundred years; and if this is so, it must have been during the 17th century, when the Rámnád Rájás were at the height of their independence and prosperity, and when their ally or master, Tirumala Náyak, was erecting buildings in the same identical style at Madura. It may have been commenced fifty years earlier (1550), and the erection of its *gopuras* may have extended into the 18th century, but these seem the possible limits of deviation. Being so recent, any one on the spot could easily ascertain the facts. They could, indeed, be determined very nearly from the photographs, were it not for the whitewash and paint which so disfigure the details as to make them almost unrecognisable.’

The temple, its ceremonies, and its attendant Bráhmans are maintained from the revenue of 57 villages, yielding an annual income of about £4500, granted by former Rájás of the Rámnád *zamíndarí*. The *lingam* is supposed to have been placed here by Ráma; and the symbol is washed with Ganges water, which is afterwards sold.

Rámeswaram. — Town in Rámnád *zamíndarí*, Madura District, Madras Presidency; situated on the eastern shore of Rámeswaram island. Population (1881) 6119, namely, Hindus, 5467; Muham madans, 236; and Christians, 416. Number of houses, 416.

Rámgangá, Eastern. — River in Kumáun District, North-Western Provinces. Rises on the southern slope of the main Himálayan range, at an elevation of about 9000 feet above sea-level; holds a generally southerly course for about 55 miles, and falls into the Sarju at Rámeswar. The united stream often bears the name of Rámgangá as far as its junction with the Káli.

Rámgangá, Western. — River in Kumáun and Rohilkhand Divisions, North-Western Provinces, and in Hardoi District, Oudh. Rises among the outer Himálayas, in lat. 30° 6' N., and long. 79° 20' E. Flows for about 100 miles through the hills of Garhwál and Kumáun, with a very rapid fall; enters the plains at Kálágarh in Bijnaur (Bijnor) District, already a large river; 15 miles lower down it receives the Koh, a considerable tributary; thence passes into Moradábád District, through which it flows in a south-easterly direction, but with a very devious course through the alluvial lowland; runs past the town of Moradábád, on its right bank; enters the State of Rámpur, which it crosses in the same general direction, with an equally tortuous course, into Bareilly (Bareli) District—here it becomes navigable during

Rámkot.—*Parganá* in Sítápur District, Oudh; bounded on the north by Sítápur *parganá*, on the east by Khairábád, on the south by Machhrehta, and on the west by Misrikh. A small *parganá* with an area of 20 square miles, of which 11 are under cultivation. Population (1881) 7666. The incidence of the Government land revenue is at the rate of 3s. 4½d. per acre of cultivated area, 2s. 3d. per acre of assessed area, or 1s. 11¾d. per acre of total area. The village of Rámkot, from which the *parganá* derives its name, is said to have been founded by Ráma himself during his wanderings in exile. It is situated 7 miles from Sítápur town; noted for its fine tanks, and a favourite resort of the European residents of the civil station. The *tálukdárs* are Janwár Rájputs, the descendants of a chief who acquired the tract in 1707 by conquest from the Kachheras.

Rammán.—One of the tributaries of the Great Ranjít river in Dárjiling District, Bengal. It rises under the Phalálum mountain in the Singálilá range, which separates Dárjiling from Nepál. The Rammán first touches upon the former District in its extreme north-west portion, whence it flows along the northern boundary from west to east until it falls into the Great Ranjít, in lat. 27° 8' N., and long. 88° 19' E. The banks of the river are abrupt and covered for the most part with forest and jungle, its bed is rocky, and it is not fordable at any season of the year. The principal tributaries of the Rammán within Dárjiling District are the Ratho and Sri.

Rámnád.—*Zamíndárí* estate in Madura District, Madras Presidency; lies between lat. 9° 3' and 10° 2' N., and long. 78° and 79° 24' E. Bounded on the north by Sivaganga *zamíndárí* and Tirumangalam *táluk*; on the east by Tanjore District and Palk's Strait; on the south by the Gulf of Manaar; and on the west by Tinneveli District.

The chief is the head of the Maravár caste. Pokalúr, now a small hamlet on the Madura road, 10 miles north-west of Rámnád, was formerly the family seat; but about the commencement of the 18th century they moved their capital to the present town, and fortified it. The fortifications (now destroyed) consisted of a wall 27 feet high and 5 feet thick, surrounded by a ditch, now filled with rubbish. In the centre of the fort is the royal palace. Amid the general anarchy which followed on the death of Tirumala in 1659, the Setupati (the old title of the Rájás of Rámnád) succeeded in maintaining the integrity of his ancestral dominions. But in the beginning of the 18th century a succession of famines desolated the country. These were aggravated by internal dissensions; and in 1729 the kingdom of Rámnád was dismembered. Three-fifths were left to the legitimate heir, while two-fifths were assigned to a rebellious vassal, whose descendant now bears the title of Rájá of Sivagangá. The treaty of 1792 provided that the *pálegárs* dependent on the *Subahdári* or Governor-

ship of Arcot should be placed under the British Government. On this occasion Colonel Martyn was sent with a small force to occupy Rámnád, and to arrange for the punctual collection of the revenue due from the estate. In 1795 the *zamíndár* was deposed for rebellion, and sent as a prisoner to Madras. In 1803 the Government made over Rámnád to the elder sister of the deposed *zamíndár*, the assessment being fixed permanently at two-thirds of the gross revenue, as then estimated. The estate is now in the hands of the Court of Wards, the *zamíndár* being a minor. He will not come of age till 1889.

The general appearance of the country is flat and uninteresting. Large groves of palmyra palms form the only feature in the landscape. The Vaigai river, which waters Madura, supplies the large tank at Rámnád, capable of irrigating over 6000 acres of land. The total number of tanks in the *zamíndári* is about 2000. The population was returned by the Census of 1871 at 500,653 persons. The Census of 1881 returned a total of 432,542, namely, 201,990 males and 230,552 females, dwelling in 80,797 houses. Hindus number 344,188; Muhammadans, 60,436; Christians, 27,910; and 'others,' 8. The area is about 2400 square miles; the total revenue is estimated at £74,174; the *peshkash*, or tribute payable to the British Government, is £31,400. In 1769, the famous Jesuit, John de Britto, was put to death by the Rájá of Rámnád.

Rámnád (*Rámanátha-puram, Rámanáda-puram*). — Chief town of Rámnád *zamíndári*, Madura District, Madras Presidency; situated in lat. $9^{\circ} 22' 16''$ N., and long. $78^{\circ} 52' 9''$ E. Population (1871) 15,442; (1881) 10,519, namely, 4853 males and 5666 females, residing in 2027 houses. Hindus number 8532; Muhammadans, 1693; and Christians, 294. Within the fort, the majority of the inhabitants belong to the Vellállar and Maravár castes, depending for their livelihood upon service about the palace. Outside live a great number of Chettis and Labbays, in whose hands is the whole coast trade. There is a neat Protestant church, belonging to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, who have a mission here; two Roman Catholic churches; and several large rest-houses, which are the resort of the pilgrims passing through Rámnád on their way to Rámeswaram. The town was captured by General Smith in 1772. The old Rámnád princes claimed the title of Setupatis, or Lords of the Bridge or Causeway, in allusion to the legendary invasion of Ceylon by Ráma, *viâ* Adam's Bridge and Rámeswaram.

Rámnagar.—Town in Chandaulí *tahsíl*, Benares District, North-Western Provinces. Lat. $25^{\circ} 15' 47''$ N., long. $83^{\circ} 4' 20''$ E. Situated on the Ganges, about 2 miles above Benares city, of which it may be considered a suburb, and on the opposite or southern bank. It is the

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